

Carmarthenshire Gleanings (Kidwelly)

By the Rev. GRUFFYDD EVANS, B.D.,
Vicar of Newcastle-Emlyn (formerly Vicar of Kidwelly).

I

Sanctuary Lands in Kidwelly

“It'm to the nynth artickle they saye that theare are certain lands of St. John's of Jerusalem houlden w'thin the libertye of the burrowghe aforesayd in the hands and tenure of the p'sons undernamed att the certaine rente theare likewyse expressed, namely Ffrauncis Maunsell for certen lands, sixe shillings; John Elward, for lands, five shillings; Willyam Nycholas for lands, fowre pence; Aubrey Bevans for lands, thirtene pence; Jenkine Jollife for lands theare, certayne quantitie of the lord's wee do not knowe nor what tenure.”

The “burrowghe aforesayd” is the Borough of Kidwelly. The official who wrote the words quoted was Gerrard Bromley, Esq., “his Mat's Survayor of the possessyons of the Dutchye of Lancaster for the South P'tes”. In the seventeenth year of James I (1609), Bromley was instructed to make a survey of the Lordship of Kidwelly, which had passed in the thirteenth century into the hands of Dukes of Lancaster. Bromley calls the fruits of his labour a “Brefe Relacion of the State of the Honor or Lo'p of Kidwelly”. The Survey, however, is the most complete account of the Lordship which we possess. It was discovered at the Public Record Office by Mr. Edward Owen, and published as an appendix to the evidence which he gave before the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire. The words, which serve as the text for this paper, are taken from page six of that appendix. From them we learn of the existence, within the limits of the Borough of Kidwelly, of certain lands which at one period belonged to the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. A note in the margin of the original document furnishes an additional point of interest, viz., that these lands were held *in capite*, - “*St. John's lands quae tenent in capit*”. The reference in the Survey to the lands of St. John of Jerusalem suggested a two-fold enquiry:-

- (1) What evidence is there from other sources to substantiate the testimony of the Kidwelly jury in 1609?
- (2) Can the lands mentioned in the Survey be identified?

In the search for corroborative evidence, it was natural to turn first of all to the lists of properties with which the Commandery of Slebech was endowed. A perusal of these, as given in the well-known article on “The Slebech Commandery”,¹ by J. Rogers Rees, rendered further research unnecessary. Soon after his appointment to the see of St. David's in 1230, Bishop Anselm le Gros was petitioned by the Hospitallers to give them one confirmatory document which would include all grants made to them from time to time. Amongst the many gifts, embodied in Anselm's confirmation is the following:- “In Kidwely duo Burgagia et 12 acras terrae ex dono Willi de Londoniis.”

There is no substantial reason for doubting the genuineness of the record.

(a) No one would question the existence of burgages in Kidwelly early in the thirteenth century. In fact, there were burgesses, and therefore burgages, in Kidwelly at least 115 years before 1230. The evidence of the *Inspeximus* found pp. 64 and 65 of the *Mosasticon* is accepted by scholars,² and from this document we gather that Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, who had received Kidwelly from Henry I, made grants of land in and around the town to the Priory (afterwards the Abbey) of Sherborne, and that with the permission of Wilfrid, Bishop of St. David's, he consecrated a burial-ground, presumably that around the present parish church; and further "all the burgesses, French, English, and Flemings, gave their tithes of Penbray and of Pennalith." The next Kidwelly Charter,³ that of Richard son of William (*temp. Bishop Bernard, 1115-47*), precludes the idea that "their tithes of Penbray and of Pennalith" were tithes attached to the churches of Pembrey and Llanishmael. They were the tithes of the lands held by the burgesses of Kidwelly in the "Fforrenry or Englishry" of Pembrey and St. Ishmael's. These facts show that even before 1115 (the date of the death of Bishop Wilfrid) the *burgus* of Kidwelly was well developed.

(b) The evidence about the early Norman Lords of Kidwelly is not without its difficulties. The statement in the *Gwentian Chronicle* that William of London held Kidwelly in 1094 and built a strong castle there is now discarded, for it is sufficiently clear that the lordship was in the hands of Henry I until he bestowed it upon Roger of Salisbury.⁴ But, even if it could be proved that this William of London held Kidwelly, the gift to the Commandery of Slebech could not have been made by him. The Commandery was not in existence at this date.⁵ The Lordship of Kidwelly passed from Roger of Salisbury to Maurice de Londres.⁶ Maurice had a son and a grandson, both named William. Both owned lands in Kidwelly, even if both did not succeed to the Lordship. On December 28, 1205, William of London, the grandson of Maurice, received a confirmation from King John "by which he grants that the land of William de London of Kidwelly which belonged to Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, and the men of the same land shall be free from all toll, passage, and customary dues, in like manner as King Henry I to the said Roger, and Henry II to William de London, the father of the before-mentioned William, had granted by their charters".⁷ This charter was confirmed in the same terms to William of London by Henry III, on October 25, 1228. The gift of the two burgages and the twelve acres of land to the knights of St. John must, therefore, have been made either by the son or the grandson of Maurice de Londres, and both of them lived near enough to the time of Anselm's confirmation to deliver the Hospitallers from the possible charge of having created a fictitious grant by one of the lords of Kidwelly. Fortunately, Anselm's confirmation is not our only source of information about the lands in question. There is no reference to Kidwelly in what has been called the "Balance Sheet of the Order (of St. John) in England", dated 1338. But then, many other places where the Commandery of Slebech enjoyed properties are left unnoticed. The indisputable evidence that the knights owned lands in Kidwelly comes from the Valor of 1535. Under *Preceptoria de Slebech* are found the following items:- "In Villa de Kydwelley xijs." Eccl'ia parrochialis de Llanstephan cum fraternitate de Kerm'dyn et Kydwelley in Arch'inatu Kermerdyn hoc anno valet xlii li."

The lands owned by the Hospitallers in Kidwelly were situated within the confines of the Borough. Is it possible to identify them?

(a) *The Burgages*. - The earliest extant Chief Rent Roll of the Borough is dated 1753.⁸ It is exhaustive, and replete with information about the ownership, the value, and the location of the burgages. Unfortunately, it contains nothing to indicate which of the burgages formerly belonged to the Knights of St. John. It would appear that like most Welsh towns, Kidwelly had suffered grievously from the effects of Glyndwr's activities. The Borough Charter of 1444 says that owing to the malice of Welshmen the town had become "waste and desolate for the want of burgesses dwelling there".⁹ This may account for the non-appearance in the Valor of any reference to the two burgages held by the Knights of St. John.¹⁰

(b) With regard to the acres of land owned by the Knights, the evidence proves beyond all question that there were "Sanctuary Lands" within the Borough, and although there is no definite statement that these lands were connected with the Commandery of Slebech, the evidence is sufficient to show that they could not have been attached to any other religious foundation.

About one and a half miles out of the actual town of Kidwelly, situated partly in the Gwendraeth Fach Valley and partly on one of the slopes of Mynydd-y-Garreg, was once a farm known by the name of Sintor or Shintor. The local philologists have expended much ingenuity in attempts to elucidate the significance of the place-name. It need remain no longer amongst the problems unsolved. The first reference to the farm, which the present writer can find, is that of the entry in the Register of the Parish Church under the year 1673, "Davidus Rowe De Sintor sepultus fuit, 19 Julii". On a part of this farm were erected what are affirmed to be about the earliest tin-plate mills¹¹ in the Principality. A rental of the town lands says that in 1753, Anthony Rogers and his partners paid £1 per annum and also a pair of bullets (*sic*) or one shilling to the Mayor at Christmas "for a Tin Mill on Sintor Bank."¹² A later rental, undated, gives July 1776 as the date of the lease granted the next owner of the tin mills, viz., Leonard Bilson Gwynne. He also paid £1 a year and a pair of pullets to the Mayor for a "Tin Mill and Sanctuary Bank". From a rental of 1794, we learn that L. B. Gwynne paid for "Sanctuary Bank and Wern Sintor". The place-name appears, also, in the more modern rentals. The Gwendraeth Valley Railway pays 2s. 6d. a year for a "crossing under Shintor Fach", and lands on Graig-y-Shintor bring in 7s. 6d. a year. The present company of the tin-plate works pays rates on a "Part of Shintor."

Now the name Graig-y-Shintor may refer simply to the Craig on the farm called Shintor. It may, however, have arisen from the presence of a well-established feature on the lands, viz., a sanctuary, and the words from the Valor already quoted "cum fraternitate . . . de Kydwelley", seem to confirm the point. *Sintor* and *Sanctuary*, as we have already seen, are interchangeable terms; in fact, they are the Welsh and the English names for the same thing. Dr. Silvan Evans gives *Seintwar*¹³ as one of the Welsh words for sanctuary. In process of time, *Seint* (Saint) becomes *Sin* as in *Sinjohn* for St. John, and even *Shin* as in *Shin Cler* for St. Clears. In Anselm's confirmation one entry runs as follows:- "Ecctiam de Amroth cum quinquaginta acris terrae de

Sanctuario et duas carrucatas terrae”. Why the record should differentiate between “lands of the Sanctuary” and “carucates of land” is difficult to say, unless indeed the terrae de Sanctuario were assigned to a sanctuary on the spot. Whether that be the explanation or not, the description confirms the use of the word sanctuary as applied at Kidwelly; and it does something more, it helps to establish the view that the Kidwelly lands under discussion were the lands which the Knights of St. John owned in the Borough.

The remainder of the argument is of a negative character. There is yet no definite proof for the identification of *Sintor* with the lands enjoyed by the Preceptory of Slebech. There is, however, clear proof that Sintor cannot have been connected with one of the other religious foundations in Kidwelly itself—the Parish Church, the Priory, or the Chantry of St. Nicholas.¹⁴ It would be expected that the documents which record the transference, at the Dissolution, of the endowments of these ecclesiastical establishments would specify the Sanctuary lands if they belonged to any one of them. These documents are still preserved. Copies of them are published as appendices to Jones' *History of Kidwelly*. There is no reference whatsoever to the Sanctuary lands in either the “Sequestration of the profits of the Church and Priory of Kidwelly”, or the instrument by which the temporalities of the Priory were sold, or again, amongst the lands enumerated as forming the endowments of the Chantry of St. Nicholas. There was but one other religious corporation represented, as far as endowments go, in the Borough of Kidwelly, and that was the Commandery of Slebech. There can, therefore, be no reasonable doubt about the identity of the acres which the Knights of the White Cross held “within the libertye of the burrowghe aforesayd”.

II.

Survivals of Mediaeval Customs in Kidwelly.

The following article is the outcome of an enquiry into the folklore of the parish of Kidwelly. During the progress of the investigation, several striking customs of ecclesiastical origin or sanction came to light, and the discovery of these suggested an extension of the enquiry so as to cover the Commote, roughly speaking, the tract lying between the Gwendraeth Fawr and the Tywi rivers. The evidence obtained made it clear that while the customs were at one period general throughout the Commote, their characteristic features were better preserved in and around Kidwelly. It was therefore decided to concentrate attention upon Kidwelly, and to use the evidence from the other parishes by way of comparison and illustration. Part I of the article comprises chiefly a descriptive account of the survivals of ecclesiastical sanction; in Part II an attempt is made to explain their remarkable persistence. Even if the suggestions offered be deemed inadequate for the purpose in view they will, perhaps, afford some degree of information about the condition of Kidwelly from the Tudor Period to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century.¹⁵

i

The Italian alabaster figure of the Madonna and Child, which once upon a time occupied the niche over the south door of the Parish Church of Kidwelly, has

been so often described and is so well-known that one hesitates to give it more than a passing reference. The figure, which competent authorities¹⁶ affirm to be a beautiful specimen of fourteenth century work, was standing *in situ* and in good condition when Mr. Deffett Francis of Swansea, made the sketch of it, which Sir John Williams presented to the National Library of Wales a few years ago. The Madonna now lies prostrate in the sacristy of the church, broken, but not beyond repair. How it escaped the iconoclastic attention of the Parliamentary soldiers of the Civil War can be but a matter of conjecture. What brought it to its present “low estate” was the reverence shown towards it by the women and children of the parish, and the consequent shock to the susceptibilities of Vicar Griffiths (1840-1880) and other influential men. It is said to have been taken down from its niche and buried in the graveyard; but popular feeling against the outrage proved so strong that it had to be raised again. The authorities, however, refused to place it back in its original position. It was ignominiously relegated to the lumber-room under the tower, and there mutilated by thoughtless Philistines. The writer has often heard old women say that in their childhood they were wont to curtsy to the figure as they passed into church for Divine Service. One of these women used to relate how they occasionally poured water into the large stoup on the right of the doorway, surreptitiously dipped their fingers therein and marked their foreheads with the sign of the Cross. It was, no doubt, owing to this practice that the stoup's edge was tooled down. Both rites were confined entirely to the women and girls; the men condemned them as “foolish and superstitious”. Every attempt at eliciting an explanation of these practices met with only one answer, “Hen gwstwm o'dd e” (it was an old custom); and it was impossible to discover whether or no the curtseying to the figure was done on a special day of the year, one of the five festivals which bear the name of the Virgin.¹⁷

Some doubt may be expressed as to whether these customs had been continuously observed since the Pre-Reformation Period; and it has been suggested that they were not survivals but rather revivals, due to the teaching of a Laudian ecclesiastic. When, however, the other customs of ecclesiastical origin popular in Kidwelly are set side by side with the curtseying to the Madonna and the use of holy water, it will be easier to believe that all of them had come down together without a break from the Middle Period. And this is confirmed by the fact that the obeisance to the figure, sixty years ago, had not in it a trace of the “lesser worship” offered by Roman Catholics to the Mother of our Lord. It was simply the keeping up of a traditional custom, - “gwneud fel gweles i mamgu yn wneud”. It had no significance beyond that. It will be noticed, as we proceed, that this is true also of the other survivals of ecclesiastical origin. Not one of those who furnished the writer with information about the latter had the slightest idea that the old customs, of which they had once been so fond, were in any way connected with religion

Two of the most unique observances were associated with Mawrth Ynyd. *Ynyd* : the *initium* of Lent. The rites, which will shortly be described, were celebrated on the eve of Ash Wednesday, that is, the evening of Shrove Tuesday. As soon as darkness set in, a number of youths would visit a house, generally a farm, in the locality; secretly place on the kitchen window-sill what was called a *Crochon Crewys*,¹⁸ either an egg-shell or a scooped-out turnip, containing little bits of bread, salt, leek, cabbage, or some other vegetable; then shout rapidly and

vigorously the following *rhigwm* (doggerel) or a variant of it:-

“Crochon Crewys ar benafenest,
Bara, halen, cawl ceninen,
Os na ddaw nol cyn Nos Lun Pasc,
Cant punt o *fine*.”

The kitchen door would open suddenly, and members of the household, intent upon capture, would rush after the youthful visitors. If one were caught, he was bound to the “rules of the game” to clean and shine all the “best boots”¹⁹ in the house. After the completion of this task he was rewarded with a generous feast of pancakes. This custom was exceedingly popular, and visits were not confined to the farms. One person remembered the *Crochon Crewys* placed on the window-sill of his grandmother's house, the New Inn, Lady Street, in the town of Kidwelly.

The *rhigwm* seems to be altogether unknown outside the Lordship of Kidwelly; at any rate, the writer has not been able to discover the use of it elsewhere. In reply to a letter of enquiry, the Rev. J. Fisher, B.D., kindly copied and sent on certain verses beginning with “Lenten crock, give us a pancake”, found in Maria Trevelyan's *Folk-lore of Wales* (p. 246). A comparison of these verses with the Kidwelly *rhigwm* reveals but one common feature, viz., the reference to the crock itself. The former are merely rhymed requests for pancakes, fritters, “or anything else you please”; the latter probably contains what was once a very serious warning. The version of the *rhigwm* quoted was the first one heard by the writer, and a literal translation of it would run thus:-

“Lenten Crock on the window-sill,
Bread, salt, leek broth,
If it will not be back before Easter Monday,
A fine of a hundred pounds.”

Another Kidwelly version preserves a detail of the utmost importance, the significance of which will be pointed out further on:-

“Crochon Crewys am ben ffenest,
Bara, halen, pen pytaten,
Os na ddaw nol cyn Nos cyn Pasc,
Cant punt o *fine*.”

The variants repeated by those who had practised the mysteries of the rite in the parishes of Llandefeilog and Llangendeirne consist generally of three lines; the first fixed for the return of the *Crochon* is Easter, and the penalty is five pounds. One of the verses is the work of a modern rhymster and is of no use for our purpose. Another is merely a challenge to the occupants of the house to try a race:-

“Crochon Crewys ar dasc (or, ar hast),
Os na ddaw nol cyn Pasc,
Pump punt o *fine*.

Crochon Crewys, plisc y wy,
Ar ffenest y ty mi a'i doda,

Sawl un o honoch sy am dreio ras?
O! dewch chi mas, mi ryda (redaf)."

The old man who contributed this last version mentioned two additional details about the custom, which may be of interest. A diminutive spoon completed the contents of the *Crochon*. After the boots were shined it was essential that they should be wiped over with a silk handkerchief; why, he could not say, but he insisted upon the necessity for doing it.

It is manifestly impossible to say whether the *Crochon Crewys* was an "acted parable" invented by ecclesiastics, or was merely a popular reminder invented by zealous laymen. It obviously refers to the hard fare of the Lenten Fast. Some would pay scant heed to the rules of abstinence. If their neglect of duty became known, the *Crochon Crewys* would be set upon their window-sill by way of caution. That it was an offensive reminder is apparent from the running away of the youths to avoid capture; and this detail would lead to the supposition that the *Crochon Crewys* originated with laymen. The crock would be placed in position on the eve of Ash Wednesday, but what the acted parable enjoined was to be observed until the very end of the Fast, that is the Eve of Easter. The third line in the *rhigwm* first quoted has, therefore, undergone some change. *Nos Lun Pasc* should be the *Nos cyn Pasc* of the second variant, and *Nos cyn Pasc* is *Nos Wyl Pasc* - the eve of time Feast. Either a negative has been introduced, or else the third line of the original *rhigwm* began with a word of caution like *Gwel*, "Gwel na ddaw 'nol cyn Nos Wyl Pasc"; and inasmuch as all the true variants have the negative, this may be the better conjecture. The reconstructed verse may be rendered as follows:-

"Lenten Crock on the window-sill,
Bread, salt, leek broth,
See that it comes not back before Easter Eve,
Else a fine of a hundred pounds."

If the third line means that originally the person cautioned had to bring the crock back to the priest in token of his having kept the fast, the custom cannot be of popular invention. The last line, of course, is simply reminiscent of the severity of the penance exacted for disobedience. A fine of a hundred pounds in the Middle Ages would ruin all but Jews and nobles.

The lesson taught by the *Crochon Crewys* was enforced by another acted parable, which in a debased form, was very popular in the town of Kidwelly less than forty years ago. On the evening of Shrove Tuesday, the youths made a collection of old tin pans and other utensils of the kind and kicked them with "hideous" din along the streets and even into houses if doors were inadvertently left open. The practice had become so vulgarized and led to so much *hooliganism* that the police were compelled to make short shrift of those who participated in the noisy performance. In origin, this rite undoubtedly belongs to the same category of things as the *Crochon Crewys*.

The *Crochon* emphasized the nature of the fare to be eaten during Lent; the destruction of the pans emphasized the duty of putting away those cooking utensils which were associated with the more cheerful fare not lawful during the Fast. These Ynyd customs form an illuminating commentary, not only on

the words “Sed video aliam legem in membris meis belligeranteum adversus legem mentis meae”, but also on the vigorous measures adopted by mediaeval Catholics to repress the sturdy Protestantism of the flesh.

After the gloom of Lent comes the brightness of Easter. The only special custom observed in Kidwelly at Easter was the visiting of holy wells, of which there is a large number in the parish. The best known are Ffynnon Fair yn yr Alefed²⁰ (Ale-fed), another Ffynnon Fair on Tyhir Farm, Ffynnon Sul,²¹ Ffynnon Fihangel in Parc Shon Edward, the famous Pistyll Teilo,²² and possibly Ffynnon Cadwgan near the Gletwyn. There are other noted wells in the Borough, - Ffynnon yr Alderman²³ near the Mill, Ffynnon y Gongell²⁴ now in the bed of the Gwendraeth Fach above the Tinsplate Works, Ffynnon dan y Gaer on Pantglas Farm, Ffynnon Stockwell, Ffynnon Shon Hugh, Ffynnon Diana,²⁵ Ffynnon Cwm Hed,²⁶ and Ffynnon Cobswell²⁷ under The Arlais.²⁸ Most of the holy wells, and indeed some of the others, were famed for their medicinal virtues. There was, however, no trace of the custom of hanging shreds of cloth on the bushes near by these “healing waters”. The bent pin and the wishing were not unknown, but the most common feature was the drinking of the waters, sweetened with sugar. For this purpose some persons kept special cups, which on no account were to be used in the domestic service. Brand²⁹ says that “Sugar and Water Sunday” was observed in the North of England on a Sunday in May, and it is known that in other parts of the country, religious processions to holy wells took place on the Feast of the Ascension. In Kidwelly, the proper day for drinking the waters sweetened with sugar was Easter,³⁰ and visiting the wells for this purpose on Palm Sunday, as was done by some, was vehemently condemned by an old lady, “Pasc yw'r dydd”, she averred, “nid Sul Blode”. It must be admitted that even fifty years ago the visits were not confined to wells which unquestionably had ecclesiastical associations, and Ffynnon Stockwell was the most popular well in the “latter days”. Pistyll Teilo, near Capel Teilo, even to within comparatively recent years, was the favourite resort of folk suffering from sprains and kindred complaints; but no one attributed the healing virtues of these waters to the blessing of the Saint and no one understood the suggestion when it was made.

With regard to the Feast of the Nativity, there is very little of interest to record. Pylgen began at 5 a.m. All the worshippers carried candles decorated with either ribbons or streamers of coloured paper. After the service and the carol-singing were ended, the candles were put out and left for the use of the church. It was deemed most improper to present any but the best wax candles - a detail which points to the mediaeval and ceremonial origin of the custom.

Of the lesser festivals of the Calendar, the names of four were popularly known, and the name of another was heard once a year, but no one recognised it. The first of these festivals in point of order was the Feast of Purification (Feb. 2). One dame told the writer that “ar ryw ddiwarnod yn nechre'r flwyddyn” (on a day at the beginning of the year), her grandmother never forgot to illuminate every pane of her small kitchen window, and an alderman of the borough volunteered the information that his mother always lit candles on Gwyl Fair y Canhwylle, and that at an earlier date the feast was generally celebrated in this fashion in the neighbourhood. The name Gwyl Fair y Canhwylle was quite familiar to a large number of folk on account of a custom

in vogue in the days of their youth. Some time in the autumn, the mistress of the farm ceremoniously gave *y forwyn fawr* a lighted candle for use in the outhouses. According to rule, the maid was bound to hand a candle back to her mistress on Gwyl Fair y Canhwylle. The older folk were positive about the date on which the candle had to be brought back. It was considered that on Feb. 2 artificial light could be dispensed with. Some of the younger men entertained a hazy notion that the candle was given to the maid some time in November, and that it had to be returned in April, and yet one of these once reprimanded a shopkeeper in Kidwelly with these significant words - “Mae Gwyl Fair y Canhwylle wedi dod, Dylech ffeedo'r creduried cyn fod ishe lamp arnoch chi” (Candlemas has come. You ought to feed the animals before a lamp is required).

“Mae Gwyl Fair a Gwyl Ddewi yn agos i'w gilydd” (The Festivals of Saint Mary and Saint David are near each other) was once said to the writer in surprise at his apparent ignorance; but diligent enquiry failed to elicit any information about the proceedings which characterized the Feast of the Patron Saint in Kidwelly half a century ago. It is extremely doubtful whether Gwyl Ddewi ever found a prominent place among the festivals observed in the Lordship. It is true that in Rhygyvarch's Life,³¹ two saints, Boducat and Martrum, “in the province of Kidwelly” are said to have submitted to St. David, but where in the province of Kidwelly the cells of these saints were situated no one can tell. Only one mediaeval foundation in the Lordship bore the name of Dewi, and that was in Llanelly in the Commote of Carnwyllon. In the Commote of Kidwelly, the cult of the Patron Saint has not left a trace of its influence. The Feast of St. John the Baptist apparently was more generally recognized. Capel Ifan, an ancient chapel dedicated to St. John, stands in the Gwendraeth Fawr Valley. Gwyl Ifan was a common expression in the mouth of those who had worked at, or had carted lime from, the kilns on the Meinciau. The owners of the kilns used to make merry with their men on Nos Wyl Ifan, according to some, on Gwyl Ifan according to others. To most people, Gwyl Ifan was simply another term for Midsummer, and a reference to the “longest day” is found in the following words meant as a stinging rebuke to a dawdling servant:- “Mwstrwch, neu chi fyddwch yn y man yna hyd dydd Gwyl Ifan”.³²

Strangely enough, the most popular fair in Kidwelly is not held on Gwyl Fair, but on St. Luke's Day, hence Ffair Gwyl Lug. An old dame brought up in the neighbourhood of Llansaint remarked that everybody went to this fair. “Nid o'dd y llath yn c'al 'i hilo i'r pedyll ar fore Gwyl Lug; yr o'dd e yn ca'l 'i roi i gyd i'r plant”. (The milk was not strained into the pans on St. Luke's morn; it was all given to the children). The great fair can be traced back at least to the early seventeenth century, for the Town Charter of 1619 speaks of the two fairs on the Feasts of St. Magdalen and St. Luke, as having been held in the precincts of the Borough “within the memory of man”. That the chief fair should be held on St. Luke's Day is somewhat anomalous, for the fine old Parish Church is dedicated to the Virgin, one of the principal thoroughfares is known as our Lady Street, and there are two holy wells in the parish called after St. Mary, to say nothing about the reverence paid to the Madonna and Child. The older fair was that on St. Magdalen's Day, and time privilege of holding it was granted to Payn de Chaworth in the thirteenth century. That the Feast of St. Mary the Magdalen, and not one of the festivals dedicated to St.

Mary the Virgin, should be selected for the earliest fair referred to in the documents, is another perplexing problem upon which no light can now be thrown.

Next in point of interest to the doings on Mawrth Ynyd was a custom which in the minds of the people had completely lost its original significance, and had become bound up with the harvest. The doggerel verse recited on the occasion, however, proves beyond all doubt the true origin of the custom. The day was called "Diwarnod Rhana", and the *rhana* took place "y dydd cyn Ffair Clangaua". *Calangauaf* is the Hallowmas, and one of the Welsh names for Hallowmas is *Dygwyl yr eneidiau*³³. This explanation enables us to interpret the first line of the *rhigwm* which will be quoted presently. The evening before *Diwarnod Rhana*, the good wife of the farm busied herself with the baking of large flat cakes. Early next day both women and children of the labouring class came to the kitchen door reciting in monotone -

"Rhana! Rhana! Dwgwl aneide,
Rhan i nhad am gywiro scidie,
Rhan i mam am gywiro sane,
Rhan i'r plant sy'n aros gartre."

The good wife then asked "Faint ych chi?" and distributed the cakes according to the number in the family.

It is most fortunate that the first line of the *rhigwm* has been preserved in its entirety. Not one of those who glibly recited the words knew the meaning of *Dwgwl aneide*. In their efforts to make sense of the phrase, some had converted it into *Dwbwl dameide*, which was supposed to be "Old Welsh" for "a double portion". Most, if not all, of the genuine Llangendeirne variants had discarded the unintelligible words for the homely *hwnt ac yma* - there and here. A Kidwelly version has the interesting form *Dwgwl l'aneide* in which the *l* undoubtedly represents the article in *Dwgwl yr eneide*.

Traces of the custom of "souling" are found in parts of the Teifi Valley. If *Rhan* be substituted for *Calenig* in the following stanza which does service on New Year's Day, and if it be then compared with the All Souls' Day *rhigymau* already cited, very little doubt will be felt as to its true origin -

"Calenig i fi, calenig i'r ffon,
Calenig i fyta'r noson hon,
Calenig i nhad am dappo'm scidie
Calenig i mam am gywiro'm sane."

The Rev. John Fisher³⁵ says that in the counties of Denbigh and Meirioneth children still go a-souling and begging for Bwyd Cenad y Meirw, - the food of the Messenger of the Dead; and Bardd Glas Morganwg, in his Dictionary published 1826 states that All Souls' Day had not wholly passed into oblivion, for on the Feast Day women and children still went about crying - "Rhan, rhan, bara can a miod" - white bread and little cakes, which were bestowed upon them yn *ddiwahan* - without attempt at discrimination. In Kidwelly the gifts were not bestowed indiscriminately. Only those who had helped, or the

children of those who had helped, at the harvest got the *Pice Rhana*, as they were called; and thus in course of time the custom became bound up with the harvest.³⁶ The *Rhana* was exceedingly popular in the neighbourhood of Llansaint, and it may not be out of place to hazard the suggestion that it has some bearing upon the dedication of the church.³⁷

The observances connected with Dydd Calan do not call for a detailed description, for with the possible exception of *Whipo'r Celyn* they are common enough - *Mari Lwyd*,³⁸ *Dwr newydd*,³⁹ y *Berllan* with the *rhigymau*,⁴⁰ a candle to burn out the old year and to light in the new. *Whipo'r Celyn* had degenerated into a barbarous custom. If a girl, or even a married woman, were caught out of doors on the morning of Calan, the boys would set upon her with holly-twigs and thrash her “nes fo'r gwad yn dod” (until the blood came). Instances were known where the participators in this unholy rite actually entered homes and dragged out their victims.

Not only *Y Calan*, but *Calan Mai* also, was at one period a great day in Kidwelly. Most of the old folk consulted knew of the practice of placing branches of mountain-ash over the doors and windows on the Calends of May. One of them remarked that he saw doors and windows thus garnished in the town of Kidwelly as late as 1845. The reasons given for the observance of the rite varied. “Hen gwstwm o'dd e” (It was an old custom), said one; “Cadw gofid ma's o'r ty” (To keep trouble out of the house), said another. The majority, however, said that the object was to keep out the witches, who were mischievously active on the first day of May. One person, who, however, belonged to a younger generation, maintained that holly as well as mountain-ash was employed in the decorations, and the native explanation was - “Mae ofan y celyn ar y witches; mae'n pigo nhw” (The witches are afraid of the holly; it pricks them). The May-pole (*Y Fedwen*) also marked the festivities of *Calan Mai* in the town of Kidwelly. It was described by one who saw the proceedings. A pole, from twelve to fourteen feet in length, made gay with evergreens, flowers and ribbons, was carried by the young people along the chief streets of the borough with much singing and merriment. The procession returned to the *vacance* within the Barbican walls, where the Castle School now stands. The pole was fixed in the ground, and around it dancing was kept up till the evening.

Before closing this part of the article, a few words may be said about funeral customs in Kidwelly. On the day of the funeral, two bells are tolled at the hour of 2 p.m. The road in front of the house of mourning is swept clean, and generally sprinkled with sand and laurel leaves. In one case noticed by the writer, the Monksford Road was swept and sprinkled in this fashion from Stockwell to the hill near Yr Alstred. The older people talked much about the funeral customs which obtained amongst the better classes about sixty years ago. All those invited to the funeral stood reverently at the door of the house where the body lay “*dan ei grwys*”. A woman brought out a large pewter dish laden with rosemary, and presented each of the mourners with a sprig to be carried in the procession, and then thrown into the grave. Another tray followed, loaded with cake and a special cup called Ebilon (pronounced Ebi-lon) full of elderberry wine. Each person in turn took a little cake and a sip of the wine. One of these cups, known as Ebilon, a very fine specimen, so the

writer was informed, is still preserved at one of the farms near Allt Cyn Adda.

ii.

The preservation of so many of these old-time customs in and around Kidwelly to such a recent date as the middle of the last century presents a number of difficulties which call for some explanation. Compared with other parts of Carmarthenshire, where the writer has lived, Kidwelly is rich in survivals of ecclesiastical sanction. In the Lordships of Llandovery and Emlyn-uwch-Cuch, all of the peculiar ecclesiastical traditions recorded herein have wholly faded out of memory. And yet both these lordships are relatively remote agricultural districts which have never occupied the prominent position of the Lordship of Kidwelly. Again, the three towns, Llandovery, Newcastle-Emlyn and Kidwelly, stand practically at the corners of a triangle comprising the greater part of Carmarthenshire. If the situation of the towns be compared, the problem is accentuated. Both Llandovery and Newcastle-Emlyn are inland towns. Kidwelly lies on the coast on the great highway between Glamorganshire and West Wales. It might be expected that the customs under notice would have become extinct earlier in a borough of the importance and position of Kidwelly, than in comparatively isolated inland towns. Curiously enough the very same feature appears if Kidwelly itself is considered in relation to the upper part of the commote which bears its name. The customs, especially those of ecclesiastical sanction, have kept more of their distinctive notes in and around the old borough than in the uplands of purely agricultural parishes like Llandefeilog and Llangendeirne. Further, it is generally held that the forces which gradually drove out these mediaeval beliefs and customs received a more ready welcome in towns where there was a marked English element than in those parts of the country where Welsh sympathies were strongest. Llandovery and Newcastle-Emlyn in the seventeenth century were thoroughly Welsh; but the evidence of both the Borough and the Parish Registers of Kidwelly during the same period leads to the inference that a large percentage of the inhabitants were English, or at any rate of English parentage. Along side of Welsh surnames like Rhudderch, Owen, John, Robert, Morgan, Donne or Dunn, are registered surnames like Fisher, Dier, Aylward, King, Collins, Rowe, Joliffe, Bonnel, and if the lists of Mayors, Bailiffs, and other officials are examined it will be seen that time English element constituted more than half of the ruling class in the borough. The inference from these English surnames may be carried too far, but it is not amiss to take note of it. The question to be answered is Why is it that in a borough of the position of Kidwelly the old-time traditions are better preserved than in the uplands of the Commote, and why have they survived in Kidwelly when they have disappeared in Llandovery and Newcastle-Emlyn?

The persistence of some of the customs in Kidwelly causes no surprise. Those relating to *Calan* and *Calan Mai*, like *Dwr newydd*, *Mari Lwyd*, *y Berllan*, and the use of the mountain-ash, seem to have in them a stronger resisting power than most of the others; hence they are fairly common throughout the country. It may be urged that the observance of All Souls' Day may have lived on simply because the *Pice Rhana* had become connected with the harvest. But no argument of this kind will account for the obeisance to the Madonna, the *Crochon crewys*, the destruction of cooking utensils on *Mawrth Ynyd*, and

the lighting of candles on the Feast of the Purification. It is better not to treat the customs individually but collectively; and taken collectively they suggest that at an earlier period mediaeval influences were very powerful in Kidwelly, and that at a later period certain conditions prevailed which intensified the conservative spirit of the inhabitants.

(a) During the greater part of the twelfth century, there existed a cell of Malvern Abbey at Llandovery;⁴¹ but from the time of Rhys Arglwydd to the Reformation, the town was under the influence of the parochial churches only. Though the parish of Cenarth, from which a portion of the modern parish of Newcastle-Emlyn was carved, belonged to the White Nuns of Llanllir, there never was a cell in the neighbourhood.⁴² On the other hand, up to the date of the Dissolution, the inhabitants of Kidwelly could not turn in any direction without seeing substantial evidence of an ecclesiasticism which derived its inspiration from two very powerful monastic bodies, Sherborne Abbey and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Within the compass of a small parish in point of area there stood a Priory with its rich "Manor of the Priory",⁴³ the noble fourteenth century church, the subsidiary chapels of Llangadog, Capel Teilo, Llanfihangel, and Capel Coker;⁴⁴ the well-endowed Chantry of St. Nicholas, and the Sanctuary of the Knights of St. John. A very considerable part of the parish was in the hands of the Priory and the Chantry. The social influence of the ecclesiastics was, therefore, very great; their religious influence would be greater. Hence it is that just before the Reformation the best and the worst features of mediaeval Christianity had gripped Kidwelly in a way and to an extent they could not have gripped either Llandovery or Newcastle-Emlyn. Hence, also, the livelier recollection of the customs of ecclesiastical origin in Kidwelly than in the uplands of the Commote.

(b) It is acknowledged that the Reformation made but tardy progress in Wales. However much it may have affected some of the articles of the Faith, Church services, and organization, it touched but in a slight degree the beliefs and customs of the common folk. There was no root and branch antagonism to these old customs before the rise of the Genevan School in the reign of Elizabeth; but militant Puritanism, whether within or without the Church, did not find much favour in Wales during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the very time that Gerard Bromley, Surveyor of the Duchy of Lancaster, was investigating the manorial customs and services in the Lordship of Kidwelly and Iscennen, Vicar Prichard, his soul charged with what was best in early Puritanism, was hard at work in the bordering Lordship of Llandovery. The present writer in the *Story of the Ancient Churches of Llandovery*,⁴⁵ has endeavoured to show chiefly from the pages of *Canwyll y Cymry* what were the forces which made that earnest work somewhat disappointing in its immediate results. One of these was the prevalence of beliefs and customs belonging to the same order as those described in Section i of this article. The witness of both *Canwyll y Cymry* and Saunders' *View of the State of Religion in the Diocese of St. David's* makes it clear that the clergy who denounced "Popish errors" were not doing it because Protestantism was supposed to be in danger, but because they knew too well that many of their parishioners were still praying to the Virgin, Teilo, and other saints, and observing customs strongly tainted with mediaevalism, which were not only unscriptural but in some cases not even of Christian origin. Vicar Prichard's testimony with regard to the

survival of mediaevalism in Carmarthenshire takes us into the middle of the seventeenth century. Dr. Saunders' *View* takes us into the eighteenth. It cannot be far wrong to say with reference to the survivals of ecclesiastical sanction in Kidwelly that they would not have lived to see the middle of the nineteenth century had not the religious concepts which gave birth to them lingered on in some wise to the second half of the eighteenth century.

(c) Reference was made in the first part of the article to Laudian ecclesiastics and their supposed influence in reviving beliefs which had been rejected at the Reformation. There is no proof that they attempted to revive anything which was not scriptural. It is true that Bishop Morgan Owen placed an effigy of the Virgin in the porch of St. Mary's, Oxford; but it is extremely doubtful that he would have dared inculcate the duty of doing obeisance to it, even if he thought it right to do so. Laud's ideal was that of a unified National Church, and whoever worked earnestly for the realization of it found favour in his sight; hence his patronage of Vicar Prichard. We know nothing about the Vicars of Kidwelly during the seventeenth century except their names. There is, however, one fact of importance which shows that the townsfolk were ultra-conservative and would not brook Puritan ideals. Not one of the Dissenting Bodies secured an early footing within the confines of the borough. It was not until 1785 that the Presbyterians⁴⁶ were able to erect Capel Sul on the outskirts of the town; and if tradition holds good they had to face great difficulties before they were able to build it. The Calvinistic Methodists were the only other Puritan body to establish themselves in Kidwelly in the eighteenth century, and the fierce opposition within which their evangelizing zeal was met is still remembered with bitterness.

(d) From what has already been said, it is apparent that the temper of the inhabitants of Kidwelly and the neighbourhood was stubbornly conservative; and this excites no surprise when the general facts about the condition of the borough from the Tudor period to the eighteenth century are known. Owing to a variety of causes, into which it is not pertinent to enter here, the town in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was exceedingly prosperous. Its prosperity, however, waned before the end of the fifteenth century, and during the Tudor Period a series of blows shattered the prestige of the borough, deprived it of privileges enjoyed for hundreds of years, and finally robbed it of its position as one of the two premier towns of Carmarthenshire. Shorn as it was of its glory after the Wars of the Roses, the Castle with its garrison still meant a great deal to the town and neighbourhood. Even at the beginning of the Tudor period it was in good condition. Leland says that in his day, the structure was "meately wel kept up". It was, however, soon left to its fate to become desolate like the "Old Toune" beneath and around its ponderous walls. We have the evidence of Bromley's *Survey* in 1609 that the "Castle together with all the howses and edifics thereof be in decaye and have bine for the space of xxxij yeares last past and more". Some of the local "fermours" thought less of their morality than of their pockets when they stripped its roofs of their leaden coverings. "Since the decay of the said toune and castle, it (the town) is growen very poor and out of all trade." Bromley mentions only one of the other contributory causes of the decline of the borough, viz., the loss of the Great Sessions. The transference of these Courts of Justice to Carmarthen was not due entirely to the decadent condition of Kidwelly. It arose from the far-reaching results of the conversion

of the Lordships Marcher (of which the Lordship of Kidwelly was one) into shire-ground, and the merging of them into the county of Carmarthen. Carmarthen Town thus became the centre of administration. The act which reduced the status of the lordship of Kidwelly, reduced also the status of the town; and the social life of the place became poorer when the various officials departed. Again, the dissolution of the Priory was by no means the least of the factors which operated for evil upon the economic life of the borough. Small as the establishment of the Black Monks undoubtedly was, it was such as to contribute something to the trade of the town and the employment of its inhabitants. The abandonment of both the Castle and the Priory, the removal of the centre of authority and the Great Courts to Carmarthen, brought Kidwelly down "even unto the ground". And strangely enough, nature itself conspired with the causes just mentioned to complete the ruin of what had once been the most active port on the South Welsh coast.⁴⁷ About twenty years before the date of Bromley's *Survey*, the sand banks at the mouth of the Gwendraeth River shifted and all but blocked up the channel, shutting out the larger vessels which even yet occasionally conveyed goods from Bristol. This movement of the sands, referred to by Camden, was probably the beginning of those destructive changes, which eventually submerged the village of Hawton, in the parish of Llanishmael.

The decay and the poverty of Kidwelly had become so accentuated at the beginning of the seventeenth century, that the Crown, which held the lordship and suffered loss of revenue, sent Gerrard Bromley to investigate and report. As a result of his enquiry, great efforts were made to revive the town, and, in 1619, James I granted the borough a fresh charter, in which it is stated that the King is "creating anew the said Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty". Spite of these efforts, the town does not seem to have revived very much. The list of burgesses proves that most of them in the seventeenth century were only yeomen. For some reason or other, Kidwelly was isolated from the larger life of the world beyond. There was no infusion of new blood; there was apparently little intercourse within the neighbouring towns. Thus the economic condition of Kidwelly tended to intensify the conservatism of its inhabitants, the large bulk of whom belonged to that very class in whom the instinct is strongest. And there is no conservatism to be compared for stubbornness within that of a small town whose glory has departed.

Curiously the town was amongst the first in Wales to respond to the awakening influences of the "Industrial Revolution" of the eighteenth century. Several industries sprang up one after another. It is claimed that the tin-plate mills of Kidwelly are the earliest in the Principality.⁴⁸ The iron works, the site of which is still known as the "Old Forge", were apparently in existence before the Tin Mills. Lime kilns were erected on Mynydd y Garreg. Canals, the depressions of whose beds run alongside the Burry Port and Gwendraeth Valley Railway, were constructed. Quays were established at various places. The mouth of the Gwendraeth was dredged. There was a remarkable growth of an import and export trade. But the men who undertook these industrial ventures were chiefly men from outside, like the Gwynnes and the Kymers.

The best proof of the revived interest in the place is the astonishing number of the "Worthies of Devon" and other West of England mariners, whose names

appear in the burgess roll. These men paid enrolment fees, which are from sixteen to thirty-two times larger than those paid by the residents of the borough for the same privilege. Between 1728 and 1793, no fewer than sixty-one names of mariners from England, chiefly from the West, were added to the roll. There was, also, a large influx of artizans and other workers; and it is from this time, and largely due to the infusion of new blood, that the ultra-conservative spirit of Kidwelly was broken down. Only about seventy years lie between this period of awakening and the time when those, who furnished the information recorded in Part I of this article, were children.

These suggestions - they are merely suggestions - are not as satisfactory as the writer could wish; but they may indicate the lines along which further enquiry should proceed in its quest after the truth.

III.

LLANSAINT, ECCLESIA OMNIUM SANCTORIUM, AND HAWKIN CHURCH.

In his Epigraphic Notes on Llansaint (*Arch. Camb.*, VI, 25, pt. i, 70) Sir John Rhys rejects the belief that the Church, which has lent its name to the village, is dedicated to All Saints; translates *Llansaint* by *Ecclesia Sanctorum*, and suggests that the saints were those whose names are preserved on the inscribed stones set in the walls of the present edifice, viz., VENNISETLAS (white or blessed life) and CIMESETLAS (ransomed life). The Rev. J. Fisher in his article on "Welsh Church Dedications" (*Transactions of the Hon. Soc. Cym.*, 1906-7, p. 105) has pointed out the strong probability that if the church had been originally dedicated to two saints the name would have come down to us as Llannddeusant, not Llansaint. It seems, however, that the documentary evidence with regard to the matter has been overlooked. In Dugdale's *Monasticon* (iv, p. 65, n. 11) will be found a charter of "Richard the son of William", and this grants to Sherborne Abbey (*temp.*, Bernard of St. David's) "Ecclesiam, scilicet, Sancti Ismael apud Pennalith, et *Ecclesiam Omnium Sanctorum* in territorio de Cadweli, et ecclesiam Sancti Elthuti apud Penbray". The charter is not without its difficulties, and before the evidence of it can be employed for our present purpose, two of these must be submitted to discussion.

(1) It is generally held that the immediate successor to Roger of Salisbury in the Lordship of Kidwelly was Maurice of London, not "Richard son of William" (see pp. 3-4). Richard is not mentioned in the Confirmation of King John (1205). But the Charter of Richard to Sherborne Abbey describes the churches included in his grant as "my churches which are in your diocese", and this charter is neither an *inspeximus* nor a confirmation. Prof. Lloyd in his *History of Wales*, p. 430, note 102, states that "*Mon. Angl.* iv, 65, suggests that Bishop Roger was followed by a Richard FitzWilliam, and that Maurice of London came next". It is evident that Prof. Lloyd accepts the genuineness of the charter, and for the purpose we have in view nothing more is needed. It proves that in the early part of the twelfth century there was a church in the territory of Kidwelly which went by the name of All Saints.

(2) A doubt has been thrown upon the identity of the *Ecclesia Omnium*

Sanctorum. Because the church is described in the charter of Richard as situated in territorio de Cadweli, it has been urged that it was an edifice which stood at the time on the site of the present church of St. Mary, Kidwelly (Jones' *History of Kidwelly*, pp. 44, 45). In view of the facts this surmise is wholly untenable. When the burgus of Kidwelly was founded a church was built and dedicated to the Virgin, and this was in existence before 1115 - the earliest possible date of the Charter of Richard. As the gift of Richard is to the "Abbey and Convent" of Sherborne, this charter, in point of fact, could not have been granted before 1122, when the Priory was created an Abbey and Turstan the prior made abbot (Lloyd's *Hist. of Wales*, p. 430 and note 101). *Ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum* in territorio de Cadweli cannot be a church which stood on the site of the Parish Church of Kidwelly, for both churches were in existence in 1122. "In the territory of Kidwelly" simply distinguishes this church of All Saints from another of the same dedication, possibly in another lordship held by Richard; at any rate, there is no evidence to show that there ever existed within the Lordship of Kidwelly any mediaeval church except Llansaint, which persistent tradition has assigned to All Saints. There can, therefore, be no serious doubt about the identity of the *Ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum* of Richard's Charter. The monks of Sherborne already held St. Mary's, Kidwelly; this charter grants them the emoluments of the neighbouring churches of Llanishmael, Llansaint, and St. Iltyd's, Pembrey. Thus the traditional explanation of Llansaint wears a most venerable aspect. It is at least 800 years old.

Another problem connected within Llansaint receives attention in the article by Sir J. Rhys already quoted. Is Llansaint the Hawkin Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth century documents?

The Report of the Commissioners of 1552 has the following entry:- "St. Ismaelle's. It'm, a Chalyce in Hawlkyng Churche, a Chaple annexed to the same p'rishe." A terrier, dated 1636, speaks of the "Villadge called Alkenchurch", and a copy of the same terrier (dated 1720), now in the St. David's Diocesan Registry, gives the name exactly as it is found in the original. Since the publication of Sir J. Rhys' article in the *Arch. Camb.* two other instances of the name have come to light, and for the sake of reference they may be given here. A letter in the *Welshman*, of March 14, 1913, over the name of Mr. G. Eyre Evans, mentions the contents of a bond, dated 20 June 1580. The security for the borrowed £60 is a tenement called the "Long Meads", situate in "Hawkin Church" in the parish of St. Ismell, County Carmarthen. Bromley's *Survey of the Lordship of Kidwelly* (p. 8) has:- "And the same is usually distinguished and called by the names of the fforrenry of Llandydry p'cell of the p'ishes of Penbrey and Kydwelly, and the fforrenry of St. Ismells and Hawkinge Churche, p'cell of the say'd p'ishes of St. Issmells, Llandevaylog and Kydwellye, being called the Englishry of the said comotte of Kydwellye." This "fforrenry" runs from Llandyry along the north-east of the borough of Kidwelly - the hamlet of Cydplwyf in the civil parish of Llandefeilog, and includes the tract of land from Allt Cunedda down to the river Towy. Llansaint lies in this tract. Some proof may be demanded for the statement that at least this part of the parish of St. Ishmael's formed a portion of the Fforrenry. In a lease, dated 29 Dec. 1694, which refers to the surrender of a former lease, dated 25 March 1676, twelve acres of land are described as being situated

between the lane leading from the common in Allt Cin Adda, belonging to the fforrenry of St. Ishmael's, to the dwelling of John Griffith, alderman, on the east, the said common Allt Cin Adda, that belongeth to the said fforrenry of St. Ishmael's, on the north. To confirm this a quotation from Bromley's *Survey* may be added, "Theare is within the forrenry a mountayne called Althkanatha lying within the p'ishe of Kydwelly". Again, from the same *Survey*, we learn that "within the sayd fforrenry within the p'ishe of Sainte Ismells there is a certaine tenemente of lands contayninge viij acres or theareabowts called by the name of Tythen Chappell Sainte Leonard with a ffyshinge weare called the Abbotts weare to the sayd tenement belonginge, scytuate uppon the ryver of Towy, which did belonge sometymes to the Abbey of Whitland" (p. 8). It is obvious from the general description of the Fforrenry, as given in Bromley's *Survey*, that it comprised not only Llandyry, the Borough of Kidwelly, and the hamlet of Cydplwyf, but also the greater part of the parish of St. Ishmael's, and therefore the village of Llansaint. It has been suggested (*Arch. Camb.*, VI, vii, pt. 1, 64) that these references to *Hawking Church* point to the sand-buried hamlet of Hawton. There must, however, have been a church in the village of *Hawking Church*. The Hawton of Speed's Map was too near the parish church of Llanishmael to have need of a chapel of its own. Further, there is not a little of evidence to show that since the Reformation there has existed within the parish of St. Ishmael's any chapel besides Llansaint; and it is suggestive that although Bromley's *Survey* mentions Llandydyry, Llandevaelog, St. Ismell's, Hawkinge Church, the name Llansaint does not once appear in it. It is fairly certain from the evidence adduced that the churches referred to in the phrase "the fforrenry of St. Ismells and Hawkinge Church" are Llanishmael and Llansaint.

After writing the foregoing paragraph, there came to hand a fresh piece of information which appears to settle finally the identity of "Hawkinge Church". In reply to a letter of enquiry, the vicar of Llanishmael - the Rev. R. J. James - states that "Longmead Farm House" is marked on the tithe map. The house, which was pulled down about five years ago and has since been rebuilt, was situated in the village of Llansaint, close to the church. This identification of the "Long Meads, situate in Hawkin Church", of the Bond of 1580, seems to terminate a difficulty upon which a good deal of ingenuity has been spent. It, however, still leaves one problem unsolved, viz., the origin of the name Hawkin Church.

Notes

1. *Arch. Camb.*, V, 154, pp. 99-107; V, 56, pp. 278-282; V, 63, pp. 229-234; V, 64, pp. 283-288.
2. Lloyd's *Hist. of Wales*, vol. ii, 429; *Early Charters to towns in Wales*, R. W. Banks. *Arch. Camb.*, IV, 34, p. 83.
3. *Dugdale's Monasticon*, iv, p. 65, n. ii.
4. Lloyd's *Hist. of Wales*, p. 430. *Arch. Camb.*, IV, 34, p. 84.
5. *Arch. Camb.*, V, 54, p. 97.
6. The Charter of "Richard Son of William" referred to in the foregoing paragraph suggests that this lord came between Roger and Maurice. However, he is not mentioned in the confirmation by King John. See Lloyd's *Hist.*, p. 430, note 102.

7. *Arch. Camb.*, IV, 34, p. 82.
8. See Rental 1753.
9. Jones' *Hist. of Kidwelly*, p. 126.
10. The two burgages are evidently not included amongst the lands which produced xiis. annually. Anselm's confirmation states that William of London gave twelve acres of land. Where the influence of the Laws of Breteuil was felt, an acre in the borough generally brought in 1s. a year.
11. See note 48.
12. There is nothing to show how and when the Corporation had acquired that part of this property which paid 20s. rent annually.
13. L:- Sanctuarium, O French:- Saintuaire
14. There is a tradition that a church once occupied the mound called the Tump, lying between Sheppard's Bakery and the road leading from the Barbican to the mill. Dr. T.R. Griffiths of Henblas, to whom the Tump belongs, says that there used to be in Henblas Garden a stone (with a Latin inscription thereon) which had been taken from the mound. The stone has disappeared. The Tump is near the fourteenth century bridge over the Gwendraeth Fach, and chapels dedicated to St. Nicholas stood on the Tump. Some of the Chantry lands are mentioned in the 1753 Chief Rent Roll.
15. Acknowledgements are due to the Rev. L. Davies, Vicar of Llangendeirne, and especially the Rev. J. Davies, Curate-in-charge of Pontyberem, for their ready help in doing the work.
16. Mr. W.D. Caroe and Mr. George Clausen.
17. *Gwyl Fair y Canhwyllau* (Purification, February 2nd); *Gwyl Fair y Gyhydedd* (Annunciation, March 25th); *Gwyl Fair Fawr* (Assumption, August 15th); *Gwyl Fair y Medi* (September 8th); *Gwyl Fair a Chynydyr* (probably the Conception, December 8th).
18. Garawys, Grawys, Lent.
19. All the boots, according to some.
20. Bromley's Survey gives a list of the demesne lands of the Castle. One of the fields is described thus - "Benorth the sayd river (Gwendraeth Fach) nexte adjoynge, one p'cell of land call'd Arvell Meade". This corresponds exactly with the situation of Alefed. A much older form of the word is found in the "Issues of the Manor of Kidwelly" (*Min., Acc.*, 573, 43 Edw. II; Jones' *Kidwelly*, p. 27) - 6s. for the crop of the meadow called Anevellmede" (? Anabel's Mead). For the interchange of n. and r, cf. Ion and Ior; of r. and l, cf. Mari and Moli, Sara and Sali.
21. The popular belief is that Sul is a contraction of *isel* in Benisel, who is supposed to have been slain near this well by one of the sons of Cunedda Wledig. In Roger of Salisbury's Charter (before 1115) Mount Solomon is granted to the newly-founded St. Mary's Church, and this apparently is the hill, at the base of which Ffynnon Sul pours its rich flow of waters into the Town Reservoir. Lands on this hillside are described in the seventeenth century charters as in the "Manor of the Priory of Kidwelly". *Solomon* probably represents *Sulien*. In the time of Edw. VI, Ffynnon Sul was rendered St. Sondaye's Well. One of the sons of Emyr Llydaw was named Sulien (Rees' *Welsh Saints*, p. 220).
22. A ghost, it was said, formerly haunted this spot. It cried in pitiful tones:-

"Ma'en hir ac yn o'r i aros

I orwyr Wil Wattar.”

On May 2, 1707, was buried the widow of Richard Morris “de Maen y Sanct”, now Mansant in Glyn (Llangendeirne). Was the Saint, St. Teilo?

23. Yr Alderman is being, perverted into Rollerman.

24. The informant was “old Mrs. Beynon” of Broadford Farm. (The popular name for Broadford is Britford. This will explain names like Britlands and Coed y Brit(lands).

25. Diana lived in a cottage hard by.

26. Hed is the brook which runs near Muddlescwm.

27. Indenture, 25 March 1740, refers to a watercourse which brought water from “Cobswell near the town land or common called Arlis to Penkidwelly lands”. (This Penkidwelly lay between Yr Arlais and the present New Road. The name Pinged (Pinged Hill) is a softened contraction of Penkidwelly. In the Chief Rent Roll of 1753, the name appears as Penkid Hill, and there can be no question about the identity of it, for it comes immediately after the Burhay - the land around the Vicarage. Old people still call it Penkid. There is another Penkidwelly near Pembrey, and in Indenture, 14 Feb. 1709, this is written Pingett thrice.)

28. In the records this is generally written Arles, Arlis and Yr Arlais. Old folk always speak of Yr Arlish. In Indenture, 4 Aug., 5 Anne, “Gardd Vawr is situated by a certain common called The Arllis”. Indenture, 1 June 1758, has “also that parcel called Yr Addlas, *als.* Yr Ardd Vawr lying at a certain place called the Lower End of the Arlais. A brooklet runs near the place, but it is nameless. The record-forms suggest that Yr Arlis, Yr Arles are contracted from Yr Arddlas. The form Arles, however, appears as early as Edw. VI's time.

29. *Popular Antiquities II*, p. 228.

30. For a full treatment of the “Cultus of Wells”, see Dr. Hartwell Jones' *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement*, chap. xviii (*Y Cymmrodor*, vol. xxiii) and note especially what is said there about Easter.

31. Wade Evans' *Rhygyvarch's Vita S. David*. See *Y Cymmrodor*, vol. xxiv, p. 10.

32. It is suggested that the phrase originally was *gyhyd a dydd Gwyl Ifan*.

“Bestir yourself or you'll be on that spot all day, even the longest day”.

33. “Yr holl enidie” in the Swasea Wesh-Latin Manual of Devotion...(Rev. J. Fisher in the St. David's College Magazine, March 24, 1892).

“Rhana, rhana, hwnt ac yma,
Rhan i fi a rhami i'r ffon,
Rhan i fyta ar y ffordd,
Rhan i mam ar ol mynd adre,
Rhan i nhad am dappo scidie.”
Rhana, rhana, hwnt ac yma,
Pic I fi a phic I'r ffon,
Pic I nhad a mam sy gatre,
Yn gofalu am y moch a'r gwydde.”

All of the Kidwelly variants have preserved *Dwgwyl aneide* and also *rhan* instead of *pic*, e.g:-

“Rhana, rhana, Dwgwyl aneide,

Rhan I fi, a rhan I'm ffon,
A rhan I bawb sy gartre.”

35. *Welsh Ecclesiastical Terms* (St. David's College Magazine, March, 1889).

36. *Y gaseg fed* received much attention in Llangendeirne.

37. See “Llansaint” pp. 18 - 20.

38. Holy Mary - "a survival of the mediaeval plays." It was exceedingly popular in the locality.

39. A woman from Pembrey remembered as much of the, *rhigwm* as is given below.

“Dyma ni'n dwad yn bobol ddiniwed,
I ofyn am genad i ganu,
Mae'r drws wedi 'i farro,
A'r dwbwl gloion arno.
Agorwch y drws; mae'r rhew ar fy sodle,
Nos heno, nos heno, nos heno.”

(Ateb o'r tu fewn)

“Pe genni ond pompen
Fe'i trawn ar dy dalcen,
Nos heno, nos heno, nos heno.”

(Ateb arall o'r tu fewn)

“Pe genni ddrysien,
Fe'i tynwn trwy dy gegen,
Nos heno, nos heno, nos heno.”

40. Mothers still sprinkle fresh water with a spray of boxwood on the faces of their sleeping children. It was done in Lady Street, on New Year's Day, 1913.

41. The Perllan was thus described by Mr. D. Williams who had carried it for many years. A small rectangular board with a circle marked in the centre and ribs of wood running from the centre to each of the four angles. At each corner of the board an apple was fixed, and within the circle a tree with a miniature bird thereon. One of the group of young men who approached the house “honoured” by their visit, carried the Perllan, and another bore a large cup full of beer. The *rhigwm* was best remembered by Mr. Francis Randell, aged 82 years. It ran thus:-

CAN Y BERLLAN.

“Dyma lan gyfeillion
Yn dyfod m i'ch danfon
A chwrw a digon i'ch, gweled
Afalau pur hefyd
Y gore'n y gwledydd
I gynnal llawenydd y gwyle.

A chyda ni mae perllan

A dryw bach ynddi'n hedfan
Rheolwr pob adar yn hwnw,
A chanddo mae phiol
Aiff naw quart i'w chanol
A wnaiff eich holl bobl chwi'n feddw.

Ni ddaethom ni ddim yma
Fel spongers fae'n hela
Ar hyder eich difa na 'ch torri
Mae'n jwgs ni'n go lawned
Pe bae'ch ond eu gweled
Chwenychech gael yfed oddeutu.

O ddiod a llyse
Sweet peraid arogle
Sy'n blino'n garddyne wrth gerdded,
Agorwch heb rwgnach
On'de awn ymhellach
I weled a gawn rai i yfed.

Gwr y ty yn gyntaf,
A'r wraig dda yn nesaf,
Duw'ch cadwo'ch mewn ieched i reoli,
Fe gawsom ni'n parchu
Do'n siwr a'n croesawu
O ffarwel, dyma ni'n ymnado."

41. Richard Fitzpons gave the tithes of Cantref Bychan and two carucates of land in Llandovery to Malvern Abbey sometime before 1126. A cell was established soon after. It was dissolved by Rhys Arglwydd owing to the constant threatenings of the English burgesses to return to England unless the scandalous behaviour of the monks towards their wives and daughters was put down (Gir. Camb., *Speculum Ecclesiae*, Brewer's Edit., vol. iv, pp. 100-2. Also Lloyd's *Hist. of Wales*, p. 596, note 115). The pages of *The Ancient Churches of Llandovery* were in print before the writer had read Lloyd's *History*, and as a result there is no reference in the former to the evidence of Giraldus. It may be that the Cell of Malvern Abbey was situated near the present vicarage, if not on Bryn Llanfair.

Probably a chapel was attached, dedicated to the Virgin. Only about a century lay between the dissolution of the cell by Rhys Arglwydd and the erection of the present St. Mary's on the Hill. It may reasonably be conjectured that the dedication of Llanfair was suggested by the dedication of the chapel attached to the cell. The testimony of the *Speculum* is valuable, also, because of the proof it affords of the presence of English burgesses at Llandovery in the twelfth century.

42. The farm-name Spite on the Twrog, near Pen yr herber, indicates a hospice within its herb-garden (herber, herbarium). The hospice may have been established for the benefit of pilgrims on the way to St. David's through Nevern; but *Gwinllan-yr-anghall* an old name for a *tyddyn* close by - suggests a mental hospital.

43. The "Manor of the Priory" is not included in the list of manors given in

Bromley's Survey. The present writer has, however, handled copies of the Court Roll (seventeenth century).

44. A chapel of St. Thomas is mentioned in Rees' *Welsh Saints* (p. 329), and the site is supposed to be Mynwent Domos on the left of the Ferry Road. The evidence indicates that the idea of a chapel on this spot arose from an attempt to explain the latter name. There is not a single reference to a chapel of St. Thomas in the documents published as appendices to Jones' *History of Kidwelly*, and had there been such a chapel it surely would have been referred to in the Draft Lease (Temp., Edw. VI) which enumerates the properties attached to the Chantry of St. Nicholas. According to this Draft Lease the Chantry held "1 burgage, 1 tenement, and 1 acre of land near Saint Sondayes Well" (Ffynnon Sul). The Chief Rent Roll states that Griffith Roberts paid 1*s.* for the *Chantry Lands* which are described as being in Park y Figgish, the field in which Capel Sul is situated. Mynwent Domos lies at the lower end of this park. Amongst the lands owned by William Roberts, father of Griffith, is *The Burgage called Mynwen Thomas* (Indenture, 9 Aug. 1734). In a note added to the above-mentioned Rent Roll, written apparently by Griffith Roberts, is found "1 burgage Vunwen Thomas". It seems quite clear that Mynwent Domos is the "one burgage" of the Draft Lease, and therefore it could not have been the site of a chapel in the time of Edward VI.

45. See *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, Session 1911-12, pp. 193-4.

46. The congregation soon renounced Presbyterianism and adopted Independent principles.

47. Dr. Hartwel Jones, in his *Celtic Britain and the Pilgrim Movement* (see *Y Cymmrodor*, vol. xxiii, p. 373), suggests that Kidwelly was one of the landing-places for pilgrims to St. David's from Devon, Cornwall, and Brittany.

48. In his *History of Cilgerran* (p. 160), J. Roland Phillips states that the tin-plate mills at Pontypool, established in 1740, were the first in Wales. The date of the erection of the mills in Kidwelly is uncertain, but it must be some years before 1753, when they are referred to in a rental.

Click to go: [Home](#): [Contents](#)

